

Placing a Security Freeze on Your Credit File



As of November 1, 2006, New Yorkers who are concerned that they are at risk of having their identities stolen or have become victims of identity theft can *block* a thief's access to their lines of credit by placing a security "*freeze*" on their credit report.

With a security freeze activated, if an identity thief attempts to apply for credit or a loan in a consumer's name, the creditor or lender would not gain access to the consumer's credit file and consequently would not approve the new application. However, with a security freeze in place, a consumer may not be able to secure instant credit, insurance coverage or other benefits. The consumer will have to allow time for the credit reporting agency to temporarily lift or remove the freeze and "*thaw*" the record for an authorized user.

Procedure

- ✓ Send a certified letter, with proper identification, to each of the three nationwide credit reporting agencies: TransUnion, Experian and Equifax.
- ✓ Allow five business days upon receipt of your request for the credit reporting agencies to place a Security Freeze on your credit file.
- ✓ Expect a password or Personal Identification Number (PIN) in confirmation letter from each of the credit reporting agencies which must be sent within 10 days of placing the Security Freeze.
- ✓ Use the password or PIN to temporarily lift or permanently remove your Security Freeze.
- ✓ Expect a credit reporting agency to remove or lift the Security Freeze for a party to receive a report within three business days of your request provided you submit proper identification, your password or PIN and payment of any applicable fee.

Cost

A consumer reporting agency is permitted to charge consumers who are not victims of identity theft a fee of up to \$5 for the removal or lifting of a Security Freeze, the *second* or subsequent placement of a Security Freeze or the replacement of a lost password or PIN. If you are a victim of identity theft you *cannot* be charged a fee for this service provided you submit a valid copy of a police report or an FTC ID Theft Affidavit.

Contacts

TransUnion Fraud Assistance Department – P.O. Box 2000, Chester, PA 19016-2000
Equifax Security Freeze – P.O. Box 105788, Atlanta, Georgia 30348
Experian Security Freeze – P.O. Box 9554, Allen, Texas 75013